



The air was thick with the pungent stench of dust and decaying cardboard boxes. The vast, open space of the old warehouse was filled with metal shelves, each housing various pieces of equipment and tools. The tin roof above offered no respite from the darkness of the night. Amidst the shadows, a dim light flickered in the center, casting an eerie glow on two figures. One was tied to a chair, while the other stood menacingly in front, baton in hand. It was Mid-Nite, and the bound figure was none other than Dr. Ramsey-the doctor who had cared for Ahnaf since childhood and had also attempted to take his life.

Suddenly, the silence was shattered by the screech of a rusted metal door being forced open. Footsteps echoed through the cavernous space as a man sprinted towards the light. It was Ahnaf, clad in his costume. His eyes burned with fury as he approached Mid-Nite and demanded, his voice trembling with anger, "What are you doing with him?"



Ahnafe's voice echoed through the warehouse, filled with rage and confusion. "What is going on?! Leave Ramsey out of this!"

Mid-Nite's eyes narrowed as he pressed the baton under Ramsey's chin. "Should I? How could I, when this man is the one we've been looking for all along?"

Ahnafe took a step closer, his fists clenched. "What are you even talking about?"

Mid-Nite's voice was cold and unyielding. "Yes, your good old doctor is the one who attempted to take your life."

Ahnafe's world seemed to shatter. "WHAT?! That cannot be!" He turned to Ramsey, desperation in his eyes. "You tell him, Dr. Ramsey. Tell him it's not true."

Ramsey's voice was barely a whisper, filled with regret. "I'm afraid it is true... Ahnafe."

The revelation hit Ahnafe like a tidal wave. He staggered back, his mind reeling. Dr. Ramsey, the man who had cared for him since birth, the man he trusted implicitly, was the one who had tried to kill him. The betrayal was too much to bear. With a roar of anguish, Ahnafe slammed his hand onto a nearby metal shelf, bending it with his sheer strength. He turned back to Ramsey, his eyes blazing with fury.

"WHY???" Ahnaf's voice cracked with a mix of anger and desperation.

Ramsey took a deep breath, his eyes filled with sorrow. "Because the Heartlands left me no choice..."

"Cut the crap, old man!" Mid-Nite's voice was sharp with anger. "We both know you aren't a saint to begin with!"

Ahnaf's confusion deepened. "What does that mean?"

Mid-Nite's gaze bore into Ahnaf. "Tell me something, Immortal. Have you ever known this man personally? Ever been to his house? Met his wife or family members?"

Ahnaf's mind raced as he recalled never knowing any of that. Every interaction was either at his house for a checkup or at the hospital. Despite Ramsey's claims of having a family, Ahnaf had never seen them, not even during holidays. It was always just Ramsey.

"I guess... not," Ahnaf admitted, his voice trembling.

"Because there are none!" Mid-Nite replied, his voice cold. "The man has a fabricated background. His house is empty, his medical qualifications are forged, his ID card, Social Security Number-all lies. We don't even know if his name is really Ramsey."

Ramsey quietly pressed something on his wrist, unnoticed by anyone.

"Yes, it's true," Ramsey began, his voice breaking. "I am not who I seem. My entire life, everything you know about me, is a lie. But Ahnaf... every time I cared for you, every time I spoke to you, all those days, all the advice I gave you..."

Tears welled up in his eyes. "Those were all real. You had no father, your mom was always busy with work, you had nobody to share your feelings with except me. I was there for you, always have been. Remember how I spent all my off time teaching you to ride a bicycle? How you shared your first breakup with me? How we dined together at your house every New Year's Eve? Those moments were real... And I-"



Mid-Nite's baton struck Ramsey's face with a brutal force, sending him crashing to the floor. "CUT THE CRAP, OLD MAN! Shooting him is your way of showing care? Now, tell me, WHO ARE YOU?!"

Ramsey, wincing in pain, spat out blood and whispered, "**Under the...**"

A distant, ominous sound of something flying outside interrupted him.

**"Leed's City Vault..."** Ramsey managed to utter.

Suddenly, the sound of multiple footsteps echoed from the roof of the warehouse, causing Mid-Nite to look up in alarm. "What is going on?!"

Tiny sparks of fire began to fall like rain around the warehouse as the sound of circular metal saws cutting through the roof filled the air. Mid-Nite, now on high alert, grabbed his nightsticks and donned his tactical vest, ready to face the unknown threat. Meanwhile, Ahnaf, still reeling from the shocking revelation, remained focused on Ramsey, desperate for answers.





**"That you are..."**

Multiple tiny holes appeared on the metal roof, and small, ball-shaped objects began to fall through.

**"... Looking for."**

"THOSE ARE GRENADES!" Mid-Nite shouted, grabbing Ahnaf and diving under the cover of a broken table nearby.

The grenades went off with a deafening bang, but instead of an explosion, thick smoke billowed out, filling the warehouse. The air



became dense and visibility dropped to almost zero. Ahnaf's heart pounded in his chest as he tried to make sense of the chaos.

Suddenly, the roof came crashing down beside them with a thunderous noise. The sound of multiple metal legs clanking against the concrete floor echoed through the warehouse. Ahnaf's eyes widened as he saw dark, shadowy figures emerging from the smoke, their mechanical limbs glinting in the dim light.

Mid-Nite, ever vigilant, tightened his grip on his nightsticks and whispered, "Stay close. We don't know what we're dealing with."

Ahnaf nodded, his mind racing. He could hear the whirring and clicking of the mechanical beings as they moved closer. The smoke made it difficult to see, but he could sense their presence, feel the weight of their menace.

"Ramsey, what have you done?" Ahnaf muttered under his breath, still grappling with the betrayal.

The mechanical figures began to spread out, their red eyes glowing ominously through the smoke.



"What the hell is going on!!!". He turned on his Thermal google and what he saw even caused him to fear. He saw multiple figures all 6ft tall, two glowing eyes and slender bodies walking towards Ramsey lying on the floor. "Oh no no no not now, no time to fear! Immortals get a hold of yourself!!!" He shook Immortals shoulders which bough Immortal to his sense

Ahnaf said, "HUH, what... ugh look I-"

Mid-Nite screamed, "We don't have much time!!! Stop them before they get Ramsey !!!!!!!!!!"

Without hesitation, Mid-Nite plunged into the smoke, his nightstick at the ready. He approached one of the figures and struck its head with all his might. A loud clank echoed through the warehouse, but the figure merely flinched. The sound of metal confirmed his worst fears-it was a robot. The hit had no effect.

The robot turned its glowing eyes towards Mid-Nite and raised its arm, a red laser targeting him. With lightning-fast reflexes, Mid-Nite dodged to the right as a blast of energy shot past him. He quickly tackled the robot to the ground, using its slender frame to his advantage. Pinning it down, he moved forward into the fray.

Sliding down with his legs extended, Mid-Nite collided with another robot, causing it to topple over. He sprang to his feet, his movements fluid and precise, reminiscent of a seasoned warrior. The robots were relentless, but so was he.

One of the robots lunged at him, its metal limbs whirring. Mid-Nite sidestepped and delivered a swift kick to its midsection, sending it crashing into a nearby shelf. Another robot aimed its laser at him, but he rolled to the side, narrowly avoiding the blast. He grabbed a metal rod from the ground and used it to deflect the next attack, the clang of metal on metal ringing out.

The robots were relentless, but so was Mid-Nite. He moved with the grace and precision of a master tactician, each strike disabling a robot's critical components. He targeted their joints, their sensors, their power sources-anything that would give him an edge.



"IMMORTAL, ARE YOU COMING?!" Mid-Nite's voice echoed through the chaos. Multiple lasers targeted him, forcing him to dive down just as the shots were fired.

"I AM, BUT..." Ahnaf's voice trailed off as he charged into the smoke, crashing hard into one of the robots. The impact was so powerful that it crushed the robot beneath him. "I can't see a damn thing!"

Mid-Nite's laughter rang out. "HAHAHA! That's my boy! Keep crashing!" He stood up and clicked a button on his nightsticks, causing tiny electric sparks to dance around them. He looked at the bright red eyes forming in the darkness around him and smirked.

"You wanna play? **LET'S PLAY!**"



With a burst of energy, Mid-Nite launched himself at the nearest robot, his electrified nightsticks crackling with power. He struck with precision, the electric charge coursing through the robot's circuits and causing it to convulse before collapsing. He moved with the grace and agility of a seasoned warrior, each strike calculated and devastating.

Another robot lunged at him, but Mid-Nite was ready. He ducked under its swinging arm and delivered a powerful uppercut with his nightstick, sending it flying backward. Sparks flew as he continued his assault, dismantling the mechanical attackers one by one.

The warehouse was a battlefield, but Mid-Nite thrived in the chaos. He used the environment to his advantage, leaping onto shelves and using them as platforms to launch surprise attacks. His movements were fluid and relentless, a blur of motion and power.

Ahnaf, still struggling to see through the smoke, relied on his instincts. He could hear the sounds of battle, the clashing of metal, and Mid-Nite's determined grunts. He knew he had to trust his partner and keep pushing forward.

Mid-Nite's nightsticks crackled with energy as he faced the remaining robots. "Come on, you tin cans! Is that all you've got?" He taunted, his voice filled with confidence.

The robots responded with a coordinated attack, but Mid-Nite was unfazed. He dodged and weaved through their strikes, his



nightsticks a whirlwind of electric fury. One by one, the robots fell, their circuits fried and their bodies crumpled.

Mid-Nite threw one of his nightsticks towards the robot's eyes, stunning it with a burst of electricity. He quickly evaded left and right, moving through the shots being fired at him as if they were nothing. He crashed into the electrified bot, grabbing it by the legs and lifting it with ease. Using the robot as a shield, he covered himself as the next wave of shots came in. Most of the shots missed, and the rest hit the bot he was holding.

A buzzing noise of electricity sparking came from the bot, and then Mid-Nite threw the damaged robot towards the rest of the group, causing many of them to fall. He quickly picked up the nightstick he had thrown and dodged a shot coming from the right. Just as he was about to run towards the next robot, Ahnaf came crashing into the bot, falling face-first to the ground.

"Bwahahaha! Stop this nonsense and start fighting like the superhero you are, heh!" Mid-Nite exclaimed, laughing. He was having the time of his life. The adrenaline was something new to him, as he had never fought against such odds before.

Ahnaf groaned, "Yes, very funny. Ha ha. Keep laughing... Idiot... I'd like to see you go into the smoke without some goggles, headfirst, saving your sorry a-" He punched the head of the robot he was lying on, hearing multiple movements around him.

Ahnaf moved towards Mid-Nite. In the smoke, dozens of bright red eyes could be seen slowly moving towards them. Ahnaf and Mid-Nite stood back-to-back, ready to face the oncoming threat. Mid-Nite turned his head slightly towards Ahnaf.

"You seeing this?"

"No... How many ti-"

Mid-Nite screamed, "GO!!!"



They both sprinted in opposite directions, ready to face the bulk of the robots. Shots flew in every direction, some hitting Ahnaf while Mid-Nite skillfully dodged them by sliding across the ground. Ahnaf reached one of the bots and delivered a powerful punch, dislocating its head and sending it flying towards the wall. He grabbed the bot

by its leg and began swinging it like a weapon, blindly smashing through the glowing eyes and destroying everything in his path.

Meanwhile, Mid-Nite used his nightsticks to skillfully electrify the bots around him, causing each one to lose balance. He struck their legs, arms, and heads with precision, moving too quickly for their weapons to hit him. He dodged every shot with agility and grace.

As the number of robots dwindled, Mid-Nite and Ahnaf moved closer to each other, their backs facing opposite directions once more. They watched in horror as one of the robots flew out of the warehouse with Ramsey. Just as they were about to run outside, a new wave of robots came flying in.

"Damn it, how many are there?!" Mid-Nite exclaimed, now exhausted.

"None," Ahnaf smirked. "BRACE YOURSELF!"



Ahnaf's muscles tensed as he prepared to leap. With a powerful push, he launched himself high into the air, his body soaring above the chaos below. For a moment, time seemed to stand still as he hung in the air, surveying the scene beneath him. His eyes locked onto the next batch of robots, their red eyes glowing ominously in the dim light.

With a determined expression, Ahnaf clenched his fists and aimed for the center of the group. As he descended, he gathered all his strength, ready to unleash a devastating attack. The ground rushed up to meet him, and with a thunderous **BAM**, he slammed into the earth.

The impact was cataclysmic. A massive shockwave rippled outwards from the point of contact, sending debris flying in all directions. The force of the blow created a small crater, and the sheer power of the shockwave blew away everything around him. Robots were flung through the air, their metal bodies crumpling upon impact. Walls and shelves shattered, and the entire warehouse seemed to tremble from the force.

As the dust began to settle, the extent of the destruction became clear. The once-intact warehouse was now a chaotic scene of devastation. Mid-Nite clung to the remnants of a metal wall at the very edge of the warehouse, his eyes wide with awe and disbelief.

The field of overgrown grass surrounding the warehouse was littered with scattered metal parts and the remains of the robots.

In the center of the destruction, Ahnaf stood in the small crater he had created, his back turned to Mid-Nite. His chest heaved with exertion, but his expression was one of unwavering determination. The display of strength had been nothing short of extraordinary.



It felt as if it was just yesterday in October when he met this naive young boy, struggling to understand how to use his powers. Now, look at him-still naive, but at least he knows how to harness his



strength. Mid-Nite thought to himself, even though he had dodged so many shots today, if not for Immortal, he would have been dead.

'Maybe I am just lucky today,' he mused, 'Eh, who am I kidding?' He looked towards the horizon as the sun began to rise, casting a dim orange light onto his mask. 'It is the 25th of December, after all. A Christmas miracle.'



The next few days were a whirlwind of festive cheer. Everyone was in high spirits, and the holiday vibe was infectious. Ahnaf, Kelly, and



I spent a lot of time together, indulging in our favorite holiday traditions.

One evening, we gathered in the living room, the glow of the Christmas tree lights casting a warm ambiance. We decided to watch some classic Christmas movies, even though we knew they were cringeworthy. As we settled in, Kelly groaned, "Oh no, not another cheesy Christmas romance!"

Ahnaf laughed, "Come on, Kelly, you know you secretly love them."

Kelly rolled her eyes but smiled, "Fine, but only if we get to watch 'Home Alone' next."

"Deal!" I said, grabbing a bowl of popcorn and settling in for the movie marathon.

The next day, we decided to go for a bike ride. The crisp winter air was refreshing, and the streets were adorned with festive decorations. As we rode through the neighborhood, Ahnaf challenged us to a race. "Last one to the park buys hot chocolate!"

Kelly grinned, "You're on!" She pedaled furiously, and I followed suit, laughing as we raced through the streets. Ahnaf, with his superhuman strength, easily took the lead, but he slowed down just enough to let us catch up.

At the park, we caught our breath and enjoyed steaming cups of hot chocolate. "I think you let us win," Kelly teased Ahnaf.

He shrugged with a playful smile, "Maybe I did, maybe I didn't."

Later that evening, we gathered around the piano to sing Christmas carols. Kelly's voice was beautiful, and Ahnaf and I did our best to harmonize. "Silent night, holy night..." we sang, our voices blending together. At one point, Ahnaf tried to hit a high note and ended up cracking, making us all burst into laughter.

Finally, it was time to exchange gifts. even more memorable. Ahnaf gave Kelly a beautifully crafted bracelet with a charm that symbolized their bond. Each charm represented a significant moment they had shared together, from their first meeting to their most recent adventure. Kelly's eyes sparkled with joy as she admired the thoughtful gift. "This is perfect, Ahnaf. I love it," she said, giving him a warm hug.

Kelly, in turn, gave Ahnaf a custom-made orange jacket. It was sleek and stylish, with his superhero emblem subtly embossed on the back. "I thought you could use something cool to wear when you're not saving the world," she teased, handing him the jacket.

Ahnaf grinned as he tried it on. "This is awesome, Kelly. Thank you so much!" He gave her a playful twirl, showing off the jacket. "I feel like a superhero even when I'm off duty now."

The exchange of gifts was a heartfelt moment, filled with appreciation and love. It was clear that they had put a lot of thought into choosing something special for each other, making the festive season even more memorable.

Even Mid-Nite didn't make a call, which was unusual for him. Maybe he was enjoying time with his family, though it was hard to imagine him taking a break. Ahnaf introduced me to him back in October. I've never seen what he looks like under the mask; he insists it's safer that way. Given his three years of experience as a vigilante, who am I to disagree?

We didn't know much about him, and he didn't know much about us, but we shared a common enemy: the Heartlands, the mob that had started to endanger the citizens of Leeds. Mid-Nite trained us, teaching us martial arts and helping us develop our powers further. He even created a secure app called 'Vigil' for us to communicate, as we never shared phone numbers.

Mid-Nite never revealed why he became a vigilante. All he would say was that the Heartlands took everything from him. His past remained a mystery, but his dedication and skill were undeniable. He was a man driven by a deep sense of justice, and that was enough for us to trust him.



Mid-Nite has been tracking and monitoring the Heartlands for the past three years. He's destroyed a few of their bases, but they're like the heads of a hydra-destroy one, and two more take its place. This is the first time he's seen them so desperate, though. They're hoarding debts before the duration has expired, riling up local gangs, and causing armed robberies across the city.

We've made the news several times because of our interventions. I remember the first time it happened, Ahnaf almost threw up-ah, the innocence of youth. These past few months have been hectic, but now, for some reason, it all just stopped.

As they say, there's a calm before the storm. Maybe a storm is coming, and we all have to be prepared for it.

"Eric, come quick!!!" Ahnaf screamed, his voice filled with urgency.

"What happened?" I asked, looking back from the chair I was sitting in.

We were at Ahnaf's house. Ahnaf was sitting beside Kelly, remote in hand, watching television. Ruvana had gone outside to meet up with her friends. As I approached them with a coffee in hand, I saw that it was a news channel. We were their topic of discussion, of course, but this time... The Sentinel was with the casters. Our icon, the hero we always wanted to be when we were young. We were all so excited as The Sentinel was going to talk about us! We sat there eagerly, and the news anchor lady asked.

"Can you believe it?" Ahnaf said, his eyes wide with excitement.

"The Sentinel is actually going to talk about us!"

Kelly grinned, her excitement matching Ahnaf's. "This is amazing! I never thought we'd get this kind of recognition."

I sat down beside them, my heart racing. "I know, right? The Sentinel is a legend. This is huge for us."

The news anchor lady began speaking, her voice clear and professional. "Today, we have a special guest with us, The Sentinel,

who will be discussing the recent activities of the new vigilantes in our city."

Ahnaf leaned forward, his eyes glued to the screen. "I can't believe this is happening. Do you think he'll mention our last mission?"

Kelly nodded, her eyes sparkling. "He has to! That was one of our best moments."

I took a sip of my coffee, trying to calm my nerves. "Whatever he says, this is a big deal. We've worked so hard for this."





"So, Sentinel, you must have seen this video on the internet, right? What do you think about our own superheroes of the UK? The Immortal, who seems to be as strong as you, and The Blur, who has inhuman speed. I remember you saying that it was never possible anywhere else, but here we are now."

The Sentinel looked down at the ground, then raised his gaze to the camera, his expression cold and calculating. "Well, I never disagreed that it was not possible to make superheroes."

"Then what exactly did you mean years ago when you stated that there would be no superheroes no matter how much we try?"

The Sentinel's eyes narrowed, and a menacing smile played on his lips. "I developed these powers back when I was born in 1980. I started realizing my abilities as a kid, and after that, I began doing good for humanity, just like every other hero in the USA."

"Yes, but that was not my question. My question wa-"

He cut her off with a sly, almost sinister smile. "No, no, my young lady, ha-ha. Listen to me first. The point I am trying to make is that superheroes are born, not made. The people you see there in Leeds are nothing but adrenaline junkies, buffed up by some experimental steroids. We know how these tests go on in the dark, conducted by secret governmental organizations. Maybe what is happening there is just a test."

His words were cold and dismissive, dripping with disdain. The Sentinel's tone left no room for doubt-he saw us as mere troublemakers. The casual way he dismissed our efforts and achievements was chilling, a stark reminder of the harsh reality we faced.



The Sentinel's eyes gleamed with a sinister light as he stared into the camera, his gaze piercing through the screen. A wicked smile curled on his lips as he spoke, his voice dripping with malice. "Later, they can be weapons of mass destruction. I will stop that in the coming future and make sure nobody ever tries this again. So,

Immortal and Blur... if you are watching this, why don't you stop before you... are made to? Hmmm...?"

His words sent chills down my spine. I could see Ahnaf's face contort with upset and disturbance, and even the newscasters looked worried.

"OH!" Sentinel exclaimed, his tone suddenly shifting to a mockingly cheerful one. "So sorry, I got carried away, ha-ha. The passion I have for justice, eh? Keep up the good work, and off I go!"

The contrast between his menacing threat and his feigned apology was chilling.

Ahnaf switched off the TV, his heart heavy with disbelief. This was something they had never anticipated. Since childhood, Sentinel had been their hero, their beacon of hope. Hearing such cruel words from him was nothing short of devastating. Kelly wrapped her arms around Ahnaf, her voice a soft whisper in his ear...



Ahnaf felt a warmth spread through him as Kelly's words echoed in his ears. "I don't care what he says, you are my superhero!" she declared, her voice filled with unwavering conviction. She leaned in, planting a gentle kiss on his cheek, her touch as soft as a feather.

Ahnaf's heart skipped a beat, and he couldn't help but smile. Kelly's eyes sparkled with affection as she looked at him, her gaze filled with love and admiration. "You too, Eric!" she added, turning to include their loyal friend in the moment.

She got that smile again. The smile that brightens all the mood. Ahnaf couldn't help but feel his spirits lift. No matter how tense the situation, Kelly always found a way to cheer them all up.

Ahnaf pulled Kelly closer, wrapping his arms around her in a tender embrace. "Thank you, Kelly," he whispered, his voice filled with gratitude. "I don't know what I'd do without you."

Kelly rested her head on his shoulder, her fingers tracing soothing patterns on his back. "We'll face this together, Ahnaf. No matter what happens, we'll always have each other."

Just then, Ahnaf's phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Sky Garden Tower, right now."

"Mid-Nite? Now?"

"Yes, come quickly."

He ended the call and turned to us.

"It was Mid-Nite; he wants us to go to the Sky Garden Tower."

"Now!? But it's almost midnight! How are we supposed to do this when your mom is out?" I replied, concerned.

Kelly stepped in, her voice filled with determination. "Just go, you two. Show the world you're not just adrenaline junkies. I'll manage Ms. Sohail."

"Thank you, Kelly!" Ahnaf hugged her tightly. "You're the best!"

With that, Ahnaf headed upstairs to suit up, and I did the same. We took the alleyways down the city to avoid being noticed. It was December 31st, after all, and the streets were quite lively even at 11 PM during this time of the year. I carried Immortal on my back and ran up the skyscraper.

When we reached the top, we saw Mid-Nite sitting near the edge, gazing at a building in the distance. It was Leeds City Vault, the most secure bank in the city. He had three bags with him. As we approached, he stood up and spoke.



"Hey guys, been a while."

"Where were you these past few days?" Immortal asked.

"Researching, and today we get our answers."

"What answers?" I asked, confused.

"The answer Ramsey asked us to seek."

"No way, it's a trap!" I exclaimed.

"Exactly. When we go in knowing it's a trap, we go prepared," Immortal explained.

"And what if they know that we know it's a trap and they've prepared for it too?" I countered.

"We know that too, which is why we are prepared an-"

"Guys, how about you two shut up and wear this!" Mid-Nite interrupted, throwing two bags at us.

"What is this?" I asked.

"A parachute. Immortal, you throw us high up in the sky. The bank is 400 meters away from us. Since you can jump about 40 meters, you can catch up to us pretty easily. I've created this device that will inject a virus into their system, shutting down all their security for 10 minutes. Within that 10 minutes, we reach the vault located 100 feet underground."

"Leeds' most secure bank, and you can hack it just like that?" I asked, incredulous.

"Yes, for 10 minutes. Do you think anyone else around here has the super speed to get the job done within that time frame?" Mid-Nite replied confidently.

"Yes, but what about the security guards?" Immortal asked, his voice steady.





"We have Blur for that too. We have a total of 10 minutes," Mid-Nite began, showing us the blueprint of the bank. "Here's the plan:

Blur will knock out the guards and find the lift within 1 minute. I already have the location for that. That's 1 minute.

The lift takes 2 minutes to go down. For security measures, it goes up and does not stay, so it will go up. While it goes up, we will have 2 minutes to search for everything we need on the Heartlands. That's 5 minutes.

We will then call for the lift again, and we will have 2 minutes to review what we found and take what's necessary. That's 7 minutes.

The next 2 minutes are for us to get into the lift and go upstairs. That's 9 minutes.

The remaining 1 minute will be up to Blur. He will carry both of us out and far away from the complex. Any questions?"

We both looked at each other, trying to process every bit of information. Then I looked at Mid-Nite, feeling the weight of the mission but also the confidence in our plan.



"Uh... can't we just ask them for it? I mean, the Heartlands are a menace, so I guess the bank could help. I mean, we are superheroes, right? We can't rob banks!" I asked, feeling a bit unsure.

"And they would believe a man in costume rather than the ones paying them to keep stuff hidden, isn't it? Don't be naive, Blur. This isn't black and white. We have a chance to defeat the Heartlands once and for all, and we must take it. This is the ultimate test of your speed. We can't miss a second here, or we're all doomed. So, are you all with me?" Mid-Nite placed his fist out.

I hesitated, my mind racing with doubts. "But what if I mess up the timing? What if I'm not fast enough? What if the plan fails because of me?"

Mid-Nite looked at me, his eyes filled with determination. "Blur, you have the speed and the skills. We've trained for this. Trust yourself. We trust you. We can't afford to let fear hold us back."

Ahnaf nodded, placing his hand on my shoulder. "We've got your back, Eric. We believe in you."

Taking a deep breath, I felt a surge of confidence. We bumped our fists in unison and said, "Yes!"

We started preparing ourselves, wearing our parachute bags, and discussing the strategy over and over again, making sure we all knew our roles. All three of us looked at the bank in the distance. Maybe it was a trap, maybe we would find nothing there, but the bank was the only clue we had left. Desperate times called for desperate measures. We could either keep fighting the Heartlands, knowing they would grow regardless, or find their heart with this last clue and put a stop to them altogether.

As I was wondering, the sky lit up in **crimson red**. I looked up and saw it...



Hundreds of firecrackers, in a myriad of colors, burst across the night sky. It was 12 AM, New Year. "Let's start this new year with something positive," I thought. "A very happy new year to me, to us, to our families and friends, and most importantly, even to you, **far back in the distance.**"

Let this be the start of our new beginning and let this be the beginning of the end for the Heartlands, once and for all...